decades, the ECL's equity has been fully eroded and therefore in pursuance of the statutory provisions in the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985, ECL had no other option but to refer itself to the BIFR on 17.11.99.

The resolution passed by the Board of Directors of ECL in their meeting held on 24.10.98 for closure of highly loss-making 64 mines of the company has not yet been implemented. Several milder opinions for revival of ECL have been offered to the trade unions who have not accepted any one of them. The last of the revival packages including early retirement of 22,000 employees above 55 years of age under an arrangement similar to the Voluntary Retirement Scheme has also been turned down by the trade unions. No package for revival of ECL can be implemented without a reasonable extent of downsizing the manpower of the company.

Casual workers in MCL

254. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of state for MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of causal workers in different coal fields under Mahanadi Coal Fields Ltd.,

(b) since when they are working as casual workers;

(c) whether Government have any proposal to make them regular; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) As reported by Coal India Limited, no casual worker has been employed in the coalfields under Mahanadi Coalfields Limited.

(b) to (d) Do not arise in view of reply given to part (a) above

Jobs for land losers under MCL

255. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of State for MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Mahanadi Coal Fields Ltd. stopped giving job to the land losers under its various coal fields;